

12 FEBRUARY 1976

Approved For Release 2005/01/11 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000300520002-4

## Papal Bug For the CIA Is Alleged

ROME (UPI) — An Italian news magazine says the late Cardinal Angelo Dell'Acqua headed an intelligence network which bugged papal audiences, kept files on hundreds of priests and gave confidential information to the CIA.

L'Espresso, a non-Communist leftwing magazine, gave no sources for its story, published yesterday. It said the main figures in the alleged spying network were Cardinal Dell'Acqua, who died in 1972, and Archbishop Igino Cardinale, the Vatican's current nuncio (ambassador) to Belgium.

CARDINALE, an Italian who spent several years in the United States, shrugged off the allegations when he arrived in Rome from Brussels.

"I am no CIA agent, I'm just a person who spent some time in America," he told reporters.

Vatican spokesman Federico Alessandrini called the allegations "ignoble slanders."

"After reading the article, I have an absolute duty to denounce its baseness, which unfortunately seems to be part of a trend that dishonors newspapers and journalists," Alessandrini said.

L'Espresso said agents of Italy's Defense Intelligence Service, acting on instructions from Dell'Acqua, bugged a private conversation in the papal private library in 1967 between Pope Paul VI and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I of Istanbul.